

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) A process for rectificatively separating liquids comprising (meth)acrylic monomers in a rectification column ~~by~~ comprising:

withdrawing a stream from the rectification column at at least one withdrawal point during rectification,

treating the stream withdrawn and, after the treatment,

recycling at least a portion of this stream as a liquid phase into the rectification column at at least one recycle point,

wherein ~~the~~ the liquid phase recycled into the rectification column has a content of molecular oxygen, C_R , in the liquid phase recycled into the rectification column of molecular oxygen, expressed in percent of the ~~by weight of this~~ the liquid phase, and a reflux liquid within the rectification column at the recycle point has a content of molecular oxygen, C_F , expressed in percent by weight of the reflux liquid,

wherein a C_R/C_F ratio is at least 2 ~~is at least twice as high as the content C_F of molecular oxygen present in the reflux liquid of the rectification column at the recycle point and expressed in percent of the weight of the reflux liquid.~~

Claim 2. (Currently Amended) A ~~The~~ process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the C_R/C_F ratio is ≥ 5 .

Claim 3. (Currently Amended) A ~~The~~ process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the C_R/C_F ratio is ≥ 20 .

Claim 4. (New) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the treating step is at least one treatment selected from the group consisting of removal of oligomerized and/or polymerized (meth)acrylic monomers, at least partial condensation of the stream, and introduction of a source of molecular oxygen to ensure a C_R/C_F ratio of ≥ 2 .

Claim 5 (New) The process as claimed in claim 4, wherein the treating step is removal of oligomerized and/or polymerized (meth)acrylic monomers.

Claim 6 (New) The process as claimed in claim 4, wherein the treating step is at least partial condensation of the stream.

Claim 7. (New) The process as claimed in claim 4, wherein the treating step is introduction of a source of molecular oxygen to ensure a C_R/C_F ratio of ≥ 2 .